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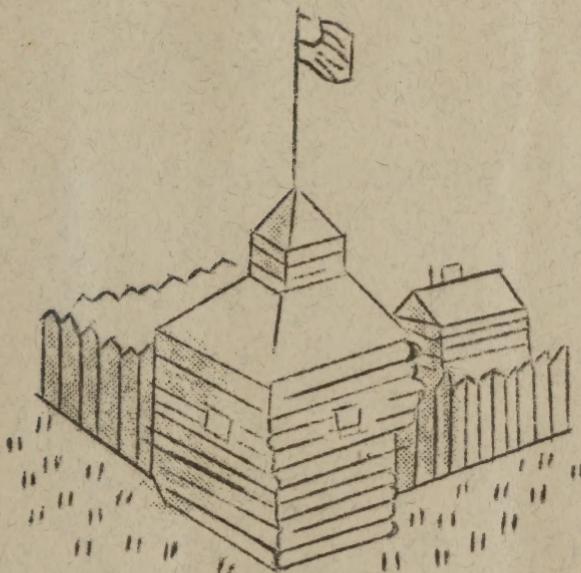
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF FORT
OUIATENON TIPPECANOE
BATTLEFIELD AND GREATER
LAFAYETTE

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A BRIEF HISTORY

OF



FORT OUIATENON

TIPPECANOE BATTLEFIELD

GREATER LAFAYETTE

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF

FORT OUIATENON

TIPPECANOE BATTLEFIELD

AND

GREATER LAFAYETTE

*GREATER LAFAYETTE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA*

MARCH, 1954

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FORT OUIATENON
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

FOUR MILES SOUTH OF LAFAYETTE, INDIANA, IS ONE OF INDIANA'S MOST HISTORIC SPOTS.

OUIATENON WAS SO NAMED FROM THE OUIATENON INDIAN VILLAGES LOCATED THERE. HISTORY ENACTED HERE WAS OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

THIS FORT WAS THE FIRST FORTIFIED POST ESTABLISHED IN INDIANA AND SURROUNDING TERRITORY. AT THIS SPOT WAS THE LARGEST INDIAN SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE WEST.

FORT OUIATENON WAS BUILT IN 1722 BY THE FRENCH AND WAS HELD BY THEM AS A TRADING POST AND EXTENSIVE FUR CENTER UNTIL 1763, WHEN IT WAS TAKEN OVER BY THE ENGLISH, AND LIEUTENANT EDWARD JENKINS PLACED IN COMMAND. THE ENGLISH FLAG ⁷⁹ WAVED OVER THE STOCKADE UNTIL 1799 WHEN, AFTER THE BATTLE OF VINCENNES, THE FORT BECAME THE POSSESSION OF THE AMERICAN





COLONISTS, AND THE AMERICAN FLAG SUPPLANTED THE ENGLISH BANNER.

DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, WHO WAS STATIONED AT VINCENNES, SENT A FORCE OF MEN UNDER CAPTAIN HELM TO FORT OUIATENON. HERE THEY FOUND THE PEOPLE SYMPATHETIC WITH GREAT BRITAIN BUT, AFTER CAPTAIN HELM HAD TAKEN FORTY PRISONERS, THEY SIGNED A DOCUMENT WHICH PUT AN END TO THE TROUBLE ENCOUNTERED BY AMERICAN FORCES IN THE ENTIRE UPPER WABASH VALLEY.

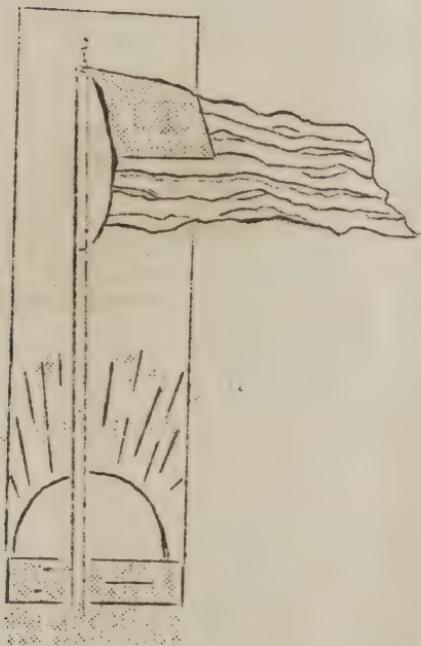
IN 1790, ENGLISH INFLUENCE STILL DOMINATED THE INDIANS ON THE WABASH. PRESIDENT WASHINGTON DETERMINED TO MAKE THE GREAT NORTHWEST SAFE FOR AMERICANS.

IN 1791 FORT OUIATENON WAS DESTROYED, AFTER 69 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CIVILIZATION, INCLUDING FRANCE, ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

THE SITE OF THE OLD FORT, PLUS NINE SURROUNDING ACRES WAS PURCHASED IN 1928 BY DR. RICHARD B. WETHERILL, WIDELY KNOWN HISTORIAN, AND PRESENTED TO TIPPECANOE COUNTY, INDIANA FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF THE TIPPECANOE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.



THE BLOCK HOUSE MARKING THE SITE
OF THE OLD STOCKADE WAS ERECTED IN
1930. THE LOGS FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION
WERE FURNISHED THROUGH THE COURTESY
OF THE MONON RAILROAD. THUS WAS FORT
OUIATENON SAVED TO INDIANA.





TIPPECANOE BATTLEFIELD
AN INDIANA MEMORIAL
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

A TOWERING WHITE MONUMENT STRETCHING SKYWARD AMID SIXTEEN WOODED ACRES OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY MARKS THE SITE WHERE A PIONEER ARMY UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON DEFEATED THE INDIANS IN THEIR LAST UNITED ATTEMPT TO DRIVE THE WHITES BACK SOUTH OF THE OHIO RIVER.

THE BATTLE HAS AN HISTORICAL AS WELL AS A MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE IN THE STORY OF INDIANA AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY, FOR IT MARKED THE DECLINE OF INDIAN MILITARY POWER AND OPENED THE TERRITORY TO MORE RAPID SETTLEMENT.



IN 1800, WHEN THE INDIANA TERRITORY WAS ORGANIZED, THE INDIANS STILL CLAIMED ALL LAND WITHIN PRESENT BORDERS OF THE STATE, EXCEPT FOR SMALL AREAS AROUND VINCENNES, FORT WAYNE, JEFFERSONVILLE AND A STRIP ALONG THE SOUTHEASTERN BORDER. IT WAS THE DUTY OF TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON TO MAKE TREATIES WITH THE INDIAN TRIBES TO DISSOLVE THEIR LAND CLAIMS, AND THUS



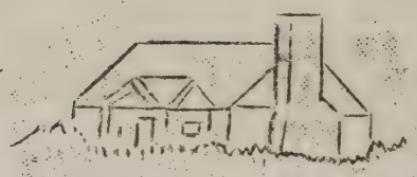
OPEN THE REGION FOR WHITE SETTLEMENT.

By 1810, THE TRIBES HAD GIVEN UP THEIR CLAIMS TO THE SOUTHERN THIRD OF THE STATE. TWO SHAWNEE BROTHERS, TECUMSEH AND THE PROPHET, HOPING TO THROW OFF THE YOKE OF WHITE DOMINATION, ORGANIZED THE TRIBES OF THE NORTHWEST INTO A CONFEDERACY. TECUMSEH TOLD THE INDIANS THE LAND THEY CLAIMED BELONGED TO ALL TRIBES IN COMMON, HOPING THUS TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER WHITE AGGRESSION, AND MAKE INVALID THOSE CLAIMS ALREADY IN EFFECT. HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY WERE AT PROPHET'S TOWN, ON THE NORTHWEST SIDE OF THE WABASH RIVER, ABOVE THE PRESENT SITE OF LAFAYETTE.



GOVERNOR HARRISON INVITED TECUMSEH TO VISIT HIM AT VINCENNES AND STATE HIS GRIEVANCES. THE INDIAN LEADER ACCEPTED THE INVITATION AND ARRIVED THERE WITH 400 ARMED WARRIORS.

A COUNCIL WAS HELD UNDER THE TREES IN FRONT OF THE GOVERNOR'S HOME. TECUMSEH STATED HIS PLANS FOR AN INDIAN CONFEDERACY, AND DECLARED THERE COULD BE NO PEACE BETWEEN THE INDIANS AND WHITES UNTIL THE INDIAN LAND WAS RETURNED. HARRISON TOLD HIM THAT THIS



COULD NOT BE DONE, AND THE COUNCIL BROKE UP WITH BOTH SIDES RETIRING TO PREPARE FOR WAR.

A YEAR LATER GOVERNOR HARRISON RECEIVED ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT TO LEAD AN EXPEDITION AGAINST THE INDIANS AND, ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1811, HARRISON SET OUT FOR PROPHET'S TOWN WITH A FORCE OF ABOUT 1,100 MEN. THE ARMY ARRIVED AT THE INDIAN TOWN ON NOVEMBER 6, AND ENCAMPED NEARBY. MEANWHILE, THE GREATEST WARRIORS OF THE INDIAN CONFEDERACY WERE GATHERING AT PROPHET'S TOWN. TECUMSEH, WHO HAD GONE SOUTH TO ORGANIZE THE SOUTHERN INDIANS WAS ABSENT, BUT HIS BROTHER, THE PROPHET, DECIDED ON AN EARLY MORNING SURPRISE ATTACK.



FEARING THE CUNNING AND TREACHERY OF THE PROPHET, GENERAL HARRISON PLACED HIS TROOPS IN BATTLE FORMATION, FORMING A QUADRANGLE, AND INSTRUCTED EACH TO SLEEP, FULLY CLOTHED, DIRECTLY OPPOSITE HIS POST OF DEFENSE. A LARGE DETAIL OF MEN WAS ASSIGNED TO SENTINEL DUTY AT THE OUTPOSTS. FIRES WERE LIGHTED FOR THE COMFORT OF THE MEN, MANY OF WHOM WERE WITHOUT TENTS OR BLANKETS.

THE BATTLE BEGAN AT 4:00 A.M. AND RAGED FIERCELY FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS

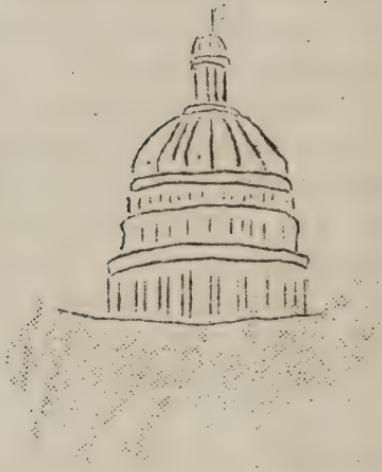


BEFORE THE LAST ALL-INDIAN ARMY TO BE ASSEMBLED EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI WENT DOWN IN DEFEAT. THE INDIAN LOSSES WERE ESTIMATED TO BE GREATER THAN HARRISON'S. BODIES OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS WERE PLACED IN ONE GRAVE.

IN 1821, JOHN TIPTON, ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE BATTLE, DISCOVERED THAT THE MASS GRAVE HAD BEEN OPENED SO, IN 1829 TIPTON PURCHASED APPROXIMATELY 160 ACRES FROM THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE BATTLE SIGHT. EARLY THE NEXT SPRING, TIPTON INVITED A NUMBER OF THE BATTLE SURVIVORS TO GATHER THERE AND PLACE THE REMAINS OF THEIR FELLOW SOLDIERS IN A COMMON GRAVE. SEVEN YEARS LATER, ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY, TIPTON DEEDED THE SITE TO THE STATE OF INDIANA AS A MEMORIAL TO THE MEN WHO FELL THERE.

THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE TIPPECANOE BATTLEFIELD MONUMENT ASSOCIATION, \$25,000 WAS GRANTED BY CONGRESS AND THE STATE OF INDIANA FOR A MONUMENT WHICH WAS ERECTED, AND DEDICATED NOVEMBER 7, 1908. THE SITE IS DOTTED WITH THE GRAVES OF SOME OF THE MEN KILLED IN THE BATTLE AND THE MONUMENT ITSELF IS SURROUNDED BY TREES AND SHRUBS.

THE MEMORIAL IS MAINTAINED BY THE INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION'S DIVISION OF STATE PARKS, LANDS AND WATERS.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY
OF
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

THE CITY OF LAFAYETTE WAS LAID OUT BY WILLIAM DIGBY ON MAY 24, 1825 AND WAS NAMED BY HIM IN HONOR OF THE FRENCH GENERAL, MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, WHO WAS VISITING THE UNITED STATES AT THAT TIME.

*WILLIAM DIGBY, THE FOUNDER OF THE CITY, WAS BORN IN FEBRUARY, 1802 IN KENTUCKY, THE SON OF WILLIAM AND CATHERINE BAILEY COOK DIGBY. THE FAMILY MOVED TO OHIO WHERE HIS EARLY LIFE WAS SPENT. SUBSEQUENTLY, HE MOVED TO ILLINOIS WHERE HE WAS ENGAGED IN TRADE WITH THE INDIANS ON THE WABASH, MAKING FREQUENT EXCURSIONS BY KEEL BOATS AND DUGOUTS TO THE INDIAN CAMPS ABOVE AND BELOW THE SITE OF THE PRESENT CITY OF LAFAYETTE. LITTLE ELSE IS KNOWN OF HIS LIFE PRIOR TO 1824.

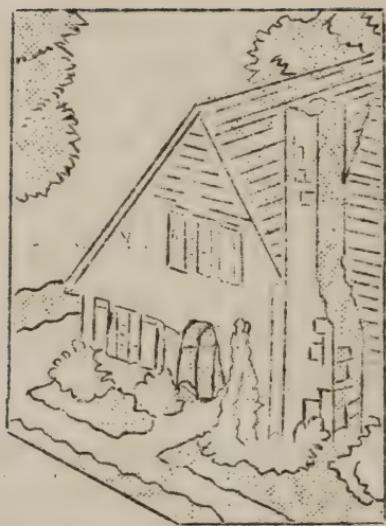
ON DECEMBER 24, 1824, A GROUP OF SETTLERS GATHERED AT CRAWFORDSVILLE TO ATTEND A PUBLIC LAND SALE. AMONG THEM WAS WILLIAM DIGBY. THE BIDDING WAS SPIRITED BETWEEN DIGBY AND MAJOR WHITLOCK FOR THE PROPERTY WHICH TODAY IS THE HEART OF OUR CITY. DIGBY FINALLY WON THE BID AND MADE PURCHASE OF THIS



LAND FOR \$2.75 PER ACRE, WHICH WAS MORE THAN THE REGULAR CONGRESS PRICE OF \$1.25. DIGBY IMMEDIATELY SENT ROBERT JOHNSON, A TAVERN KEEPER FROM CRAWFORDSVILLE, TO THE NEWLY ACQUIRED LAND, TO LAY OUT THE LOTS FOR HIS NEW TOWN. MR. JOHNSON, DESCRIBING THE LOCATION SAID: "IT WILL MAKE A VERY ELIGIBLE TOWN, ALTHOUGH THE GROUND IS THICKLY SET WITH HAZEL AND PLUM BRUSH, GRAPE VINES AND LARGE FOREST TREES, WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SURVEY".

THE ORIGINAL TOWN PLAT EXTENDED FROM MISSOURI STREET (NOW SIXTH STREET) TO THE RIVER, AND FROM NORTH STREET TO SOUTH STREET. ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY LOTS, EXCLUSIVE OF SEVERAL FRACTIONS, WERE RECORDED ON MAY 27, 1825. REGISTRATION WAS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY. TIPPECANOE COUNTY WAS NOT ORGANIZED UNTIL SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER THE CITY OF LAFAYETTE WAS FOUNDED.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, MR. DIGBY SOLD THE TOWN AND THE OUTLOTS TO SAMUEL SARGEANT FOR THE SUM OF \$240.00, RESERVING BUT ONE OR TWO FRACTIONS, THE FERRY PRIVILEGE, AND 20 ACRES TO THE NORTHWEST. AFTER THE SALE OF THE LAND, MR. DIGBY ENGAGED IN THE GROCERY BUSINESS, AND AIDED SAMUEL SARGEANT, ISAAC ELSTON, JOHN WILSON AND JONATHAN W. POWERS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW COMMUNITY.

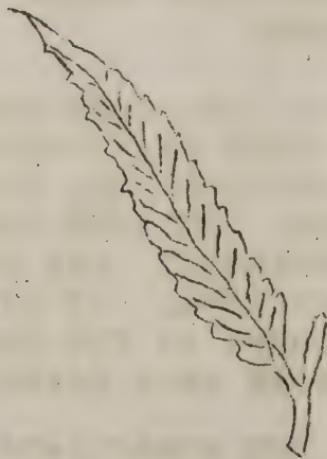
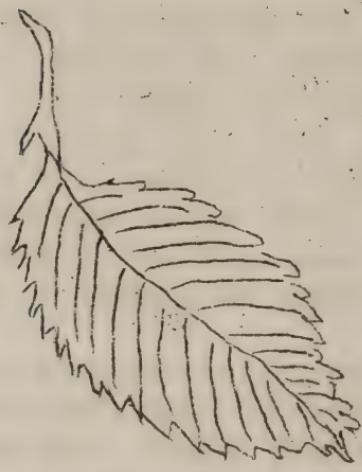


WILLIAM DIGBY DIED IN LAFAYETTE MAY 23, 1864 AT THE AGE OF 62. HE IS BURIED IN GREENBUSH CEMETERY, BESIDE HIS MOTHER AND SISTER AND HER FAMILY. MR. DIGBY ENJOYED ONLY A LIMITED EDUCATION, BUT HIS PRACTICAL COMMON SENSE AND CLOSE OBSERVATION MARKED HIM AS A MAN OF MORE THAN ORDINARY INTELLIGENCE. . . . HE WAS ONE OF NATURE'S NOBLEMEN, EVER READY TO SERVE A FRIEND.

**TIPPECANOE COUNTY WAS ESTABLISHED BY AN ACT OF THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE, JANUARY 26, 1826, AND NAMED TIPPECANOE IN MEMORY OF THE BATTLE FOUGHT NOVEMBER 7, 1811, WHEN GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON AND HIS SMALL BAND OF MEN DECISIVELY DEFEATED THE INDIAN CHIEF, TECUMSEH IN WHAT WAS KNOWN AS THE "BATTLE OF TIPPECANOE". THE SITE OF THIS BATTLE GROUND, NOW A STATE PARK, IS EIGHT MILES NORTH OF THE CITY OF LAFAYETTE.

WEST LAFAYETTE WAS FOUNDED IN 1845 AS THE TOWN OF KINGSTON. LATER, A TOWN NAMED CHAUNCEY WAS LAID OUT ADJOINING KINGSTON. IN 1866 THE COMMUNITY WAS NAMED CHAUNCEY, AND RE-NAMED WEST LAFAYETTE IN 1888. IT IS SITUATED ON THE WEST BLUFFS OF THE WABASH RIVER, DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM LAFAYETTE.

IN THE EARLY DAYS THE WABASH RIVER WAS THIS REGION'S CHIEF ARTERY OF



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COMMERCE FROM LAFAYETTE TO THE OHIO RIVER. THE COMPLETION OF THE WABASH AND ERIE CANAL WAS A STIMULUS TO THE COMMERCE AND GROWTH OF BOTH LAFAYETTE AND TIPPECANOE COUNTY.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RAILROAD COMPANIES BEGAN TO DEVELOP IN THIS SECTION OF THE STATE. WHAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN TODAY AS THE MONON WAS THE FIRST RAILROAD TO ENTER THE COUNTY. TODAY, FOUR RAILROADS SERVE GREATER LAFAYETTE AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY. THUS, FROM THE BEGINNING, LAFAYETTE HAS BEEN A LEADER IN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMERCE IN NORTHWESTERN INDIANA, WHENCE THE SLOGAN "LAFAYETTE SERVES THE WORLD".

GREATER LAFAYETTE, COMPRISING THE CITIES OF LAFAYETTE, WEST LAFAYETTE AND SURROUNDING TERRITORY, IS REGARDED AS THE AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OF NORTHWESTERN INDIANA.

THE COMMUNITY'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION HAS IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES BECAUSE OF DIRECT ACCESS TO SOURCES OF RAW MATERIAL, AND PROXIMITY TO MAJOR MARKETS FOR FINISHED GOODS. IT IS LOCATED 60 MILES NORTHWEST OF INDIANAPOLIS AND 125 MILES SOUTHEAST OF CHICAGO, AND IS WITHIN 100 MILES OF THE CENTER OF THE NATION'S

POPULATION.

IN THE PAST 127 YEARS LAFAYETTE HAS GROWN UNTIL, TODAY, IT IS ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING SMALL METROPOLITAN CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

POPULATION FIGURES #

WEST LAFAYETTE 12,553

LAFAYETTE 38,391

TOTAL 50,944

JANUARY 1, 1954

* AUTHOR - NORBERT L. WITASKE,
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

** GENERAL INFORMATION - CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE OFFICE
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

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